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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 001724

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SUBJECT: TURKEY: MFA SEEKS NEW CURRENTS ON CAMP MAKHMOUR

REF: ANKARA 1604

Classified By: DCM Doug Silliman, for reasons: 1.4(b/d)

¶1. SUMMARY. Iraqi authorities need to better isolate Makhmour Camp residents from PKK pressure to allow camp residents to express their feelings about returning to Turkey without coercion, newly appointed DG for Security Affairs Aydin Sezgin told us December 1. The DCM urged Turkey to involve the U.S. more closely on Makhmour-related issues and to deal directly with UNHCR. Separately, Sezgin expressed interest in closer Turkey-U.S.-Iraq law enforcement cooperation. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) During a December 1 introductory meeting, Sezgin told DCM Silliman he hoped to enhance our already strong counterterrorism (CT) cooperation, and looked forward to his upcoming CT-related meetings on the margins of the December 7-8 visit of PM Erdogan to Washington. DDG Inan Ozyildiz will also accompany him to Washington. Addressing U.S. concerns about the narrow definition of terrorism in Turkish law, Sezgin reported Turkey is working to harmonize its definition with that of the international community and that his directorate was "doing its best" to make it happen.

Makhmour Camp

¶3. (C) Asked about Turkey's plans for resettling the residents of Makhmour, the UNHCR-run camp in northern Iraq, Sezgin explained that Turkey is still working with Iraqi authorities to formulate a plan. Currently, about 30 percent of the camp's residents have expressed willingness to return to Turkey voluntarily, he noted. Iraqi Kurds need to apply pressure on the PKK to ease its influence on camp residents so they can express their true views more freely. Turkey is working on the matter with the central government in Baghdad and the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) in Erbil.

¶4. (C) Frankly, Sezgin continued, UNHCR is saying too much publicly about Makhmour and needs to tone it down. The UNHCR spokesperson, who happens to be a Turkish national, talks about a UNHCR role for monitoring resettled residents within Turkey. "This is very delicate for us," he insisted. For Turkey, this is not a matter of resettlement, but of reintegration of Turkish citizens. UNHCR can play a useful

role in planning and in bringing people up to the border, "but reintegration will belong to us." MFA had checked with its legal experts who agreed that because these people would be returning to Turkey voluntarily, there is no role for UNHCR.

15. (C) Turkey wants to close the camp, Sezgin stated. It would like more than 30 percent of its residents to return to Turkey, but knows some will want to remain in northern Iraq. Turkey has broached this subject with the KRG. The DCM noted that the UNHCR would likely need to see a concrete Turkish plan before it agrees to cooperate on resettlement or close the camp. Citing his own experience on the issue while in his previous position, he urged Sezgin to work more closely with UNHCR, including in Geneva. Sezgin assured the DCM that Turkey plans to work closely with UNHCR "at the appropriate time."

16. (C) At this point, DDG Ozyildiz noted, Turkey does not really know which camp residents want to return. It needs a clearer picture of the situation, but PKK pressure on residents precludes getting that clearer picture. The DCM assured that the UNHCR was willing to discuss the matter with Turkey, the U.S., Baghdad and Erbil; in the past it was willing to take steps to secure the camp and poll its residents. Ozyildiz interjected that Turkey's experience has not been good when it has raised this issue with Baghdad and UNHCR. Both minimize PKK influence in the camp, despite the fact that recent information demonstrates nothing has changed. The DCM urged Turkey to work more closely with the U.S, as it had earlier.

Turkey-U.S.-Iraq Law Enforcement Cooperation

17. (C) DG Sezgin thanked the U.S. for its decision to designate three PKK leaders as Drug Kingpins. "This is a good example to set for the Europeans," he stated enthusiastically. The DCM recalled that FBI Director Mueller, during his November 18 visit, raised with DPM Cicek and Justice Minister Ergin ways to operationalize this designation and other law enforcement cooperation. The missing piece is closer law enforcement cooperation between Turkey and the U.S, and between Turkey, the U.S. and Baghdad/Erbil. Sezgin assured the DCM that Turkey, too, hopes for "tangible cooperation" with Iraq on these issues.

Comment

18. (C) DG Sezgin appears fully engaged in his new CT brief and eager to explore new avenues in CT and law enforcement cooperation. We hope his December 8-9 meetings on the margins of the summit will inspire him in new directions and provide the impetus to push forward with information-sharing, closer collaboration with us on Camp Makhmour, MFA support for closer U.S.-Turkey law enforcement cooperation and cross-border cooperation with Iraq.

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JEFFREY